College-Ready Writers Program

In the past concussions were completely ignored, but in recent years, concussions have become a serious issue. Nearly 80,000 children sustained concussions from 2001 to 2009 and sought medical help. This number does not include children who did not seek medical attention and there is an absence of several sports. So there were actually more than 80,000 concussions. 80,000 is a huge number that needs to be decreased. Concussions need to be handled more cautiously than they currently are because of the numerous problems concussions can cause.

Some coaches claim concussions are minor and unimportant, but concussions can actually cause lifelong problems. According to Shereen Jegtvig, author of news articles for Reuters new agency, “Subtle but serious injuries may continue for up to two weeks after the initial injury.” In other woods, problems obtained from concussions can continue undetected. People could have concussion symptoms continue and cause permanent, lifelong damage. This calls for a change. A program should be started, where people can go to schools and inform others about the severeness of concussions. This could teach coaches and principles the necessary steps to take in order to properly evaluate a student or athlete to see if they have a concussion.

In addition, new safety guidelines should be created to protect athletes. The guidelines would lessen trauma caused in practice, which could lessen the annual number of concussions. According to Ken Belson, sports reporter for the New York Times, “Pop warner, a national organization through which hundreds of thousands of children participate in football, amended it safety guidelines… No more than a third of practice time for Pop Warner teams can include contract drills.” Basically, an organization leading its industry realized there were benefits to limiting the amount of contact drills allowed in practice. Pop Warner’s new rule caused the football players to absorb 37% to 46% less hits. Some coaches claim the lack of practice tackling will cause a team to become more vulnerable, but the truth was that the football teams performed at the same athletic level while taking less blows, which proves the worthiness of the rule.

In addition, children who suffer a concussion should be examined weekly until they are cleared to play, then checked for another 2 weeks after. This could prevent children from sustaining another concussion before their first concussion is healed. According to Shereen Jegtvig, author of news articles for Reuters new agency, “Dr. Amanda Weiss Kelly told Reuters Health” that “If you’ve had a concussion, then you get a second while you still haven’t recovered from the first, your symptoms are much worse and they last for much longer.” According to the CDC, a federal health agency, these symptoms are, “headache, confusion, difficulty remembering, dizziness, emotional distness, nausea or vomiting, blurry vision, slow reaction time, sleeping problems, and, of course, unconsciousness.” In other words, a concussion becomes more problematic if you sustain a second before the first is healed. A concussion can occur without a person being unconsciousness. So coaches need to make a player with any symptoms of a concussion gets medical attention. Some fans claim coaches do take out players if they think the player has a concussion, but this is not the case. My own sister was hit in the head with a softball while warming up. She was loopy, and confused, but the coach still put Sarah, my sister, in as starting catcher. She played the whole game, then was diagnosed with a concussion afterward. I’ve seen the same thing happen to multiple players on multiple other teams. So a rule needs to be made to take athletes out and have them medically evaluated once a week until cleared, then for two weeks after to make sure a concussion has not persisted and all the symptoms are gone.

In recap, coaches or principles need to have a doctor, or someone trained in the field of concussions, come talk with the athletes and themselves about the symptoms and problems of concussions. Secondly, coaches or principles should adopt new safety guidelines to reduce contact, or damage, that occurs at practice and harms the athlete’s bodies. Lastly, extra steps should be added to the medical process athletes undergo when they suffer concussions, like being checked weekly until cleared, and being checked after they’re cleared to ensure their concussion is gone. These ideas should become realities in order to protect youth or adolescent athletes from concussions as well as other injuries. Football equipment companies are trying to invent safer and more protective pads and helmets, but they have not succeeded yet because athletes are still being hurt. Most sports don’t include much if any safety gear. So it remains the responsibility of coaches and principles to take concussions more serious in order to protect our youth athletes. It is the coaches or the principals job to be caretaker of children when their parents aren’t present. The coaches or principals of America’s youth are responsible for protecting children, and they need to do their job as best as they can. Learning how to treat concussions would be something a coach or principal could do to enable them to do their job well. So coaches and principals, you’re the ones that need to make the changes. Help kids and their parents feel safe knowing their coach or principal can treat a hurt child’s concussion.